

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 27, 2005

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Bush:

We urge you to immediately release the remaining \$200 million in emergency Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funding provided in the fiscal year 2005 Consolidated Appropriations Act. Congress appropriated the LIHEAP emergency funds to help consumers meet the cost of rising energy prices and reduce energy debt remaining from last winter. The high energy burden facing low-income households and the cold weather being experienced throughout the country warrants the immediate release of these funds.

Many low-income consumers entered this winter without heat or electricity due to unaffordable energy prices last year, and thousands of these families remain without heat. Emergency funding is needed immediately to help low-income families and seniors restore disconnected utility service. For example, in Pennsylvania, as of December 15, 2004, 4,496 residential households remain without electric service and 10,509 residential households who heat with natural gas are without service.

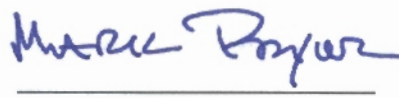
The Energy Information Administration's Short-term Energy Outlook for January forecasts, despite the warmer weather in December, that heating oil expenditures by households are still expected to average 34 percent above last winter's levels, expenditures for propane-heated households are expected to increase about 20 percent this winter, and expenditures for natural gas-heated households are expected to rise by 10 percent. These increases far outpace the rate of inflation and are placing an overwhelming strain on family budgets. These increases come on top of soaring energy prices over the past several years. Oil prices climbed to over \$48 a barrel for the week ending January 14th, the highest since the end of November. Natural gas rose to \$6.445 for a million British Thermal Units (BTUs). Rising energy prices disproportionately burden low-income Americans who are also struggling to pay for higher food, housing and health care costs.

Based on preliminary applications, requests for energy assistance are expected to exceed five million households this winter, the highest number in the last 10 years. Newspapers throughout the country are reporting on the inability of states to meet rising demands. Without emergency assistance, low-income seniors and families will face impossible choices this winter: whether to heat their homes or to eat; whether to buy prescription drugs or to pay their electricity bill; and, whether to pay their rent or mortgage or to buy home heating oil. Unfortunately, these are the real choices that face low-income families, disabled Americans, and seniors when energy prices are unaffordable.

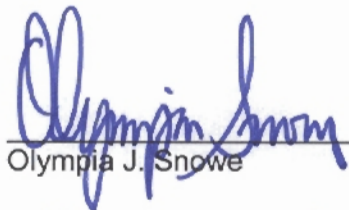
We believe the heating crisis facing low-income Americans warrants the immediate release of emergency LIHEAP assistance. Thank you for your attention to this important request.

Sincerely,


Susan M. Collins


Mark Pryor


Jack Reed


Olympia J. Snowe

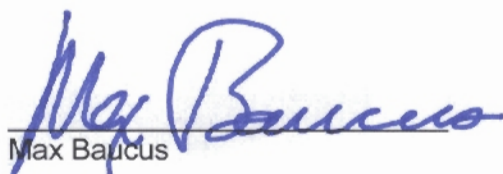

Edward M. Kennedy


Arlen Specter


Tom Harkin


Evan Bayh

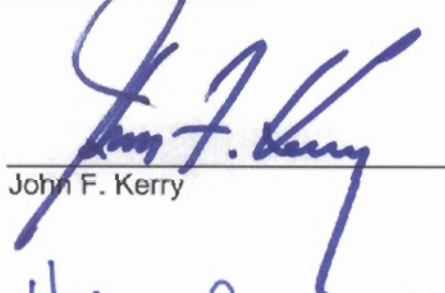

Frank Lautenberg


Max Baucus


Lincoln D. Chafee


Barbara A. Mikulski


James M. Jeffords


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Mike DeWine


Hillary Rodham Clinton


Mark Dayton


Jon S. Corzine


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Joseph R. Biden




Richard G. Lugar



Richard J. Durbin



Carl Levin



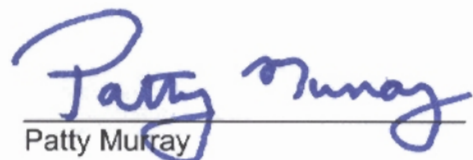
Christopher J. Dodd



Thomas R. Carper



Debbie Stabenow



Patty Murray



Patrick J. Leahy



Joseph I. Lieberman



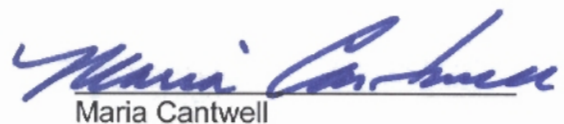
Byron L. Dorgan



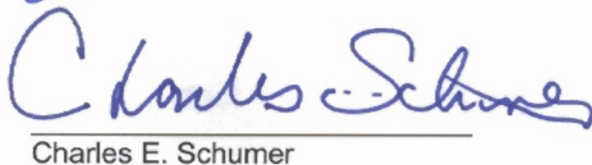
Ron Wyden



Jeff Bingaman



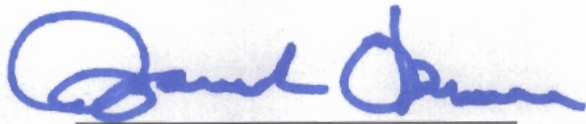
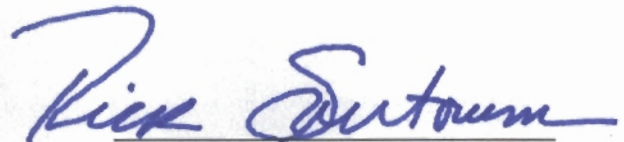

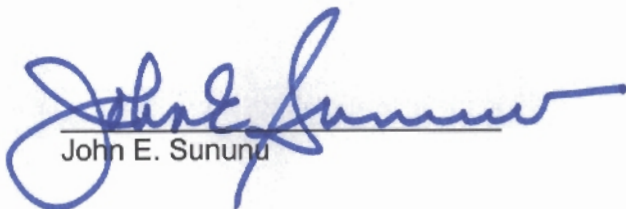
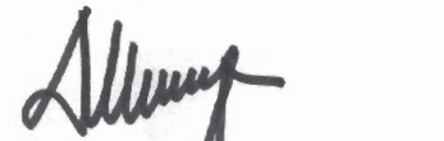
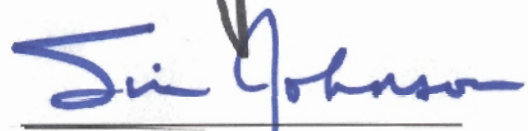
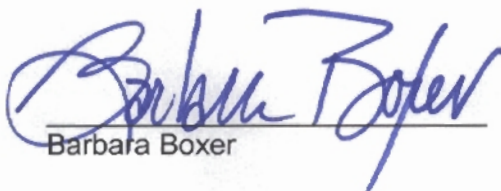
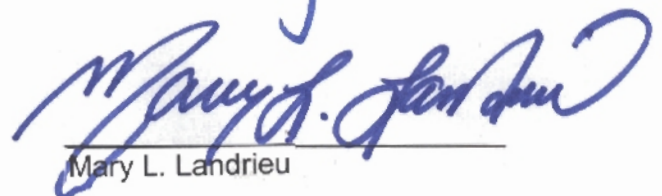
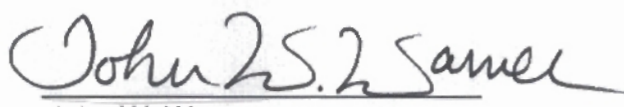
Maria Cantwell



Charles E. Schumer



Paul S. Sarbanes


John D. Rockefeller
Gordon Smith
Barack Obama
Rick Santorum
Herb Kohl
Charles E. Grassley
Russell D. Feingold
Blanche L. Lincoln
John E. Sununu
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George Allen
Tim Johnson
Barbara Boxer
Mary L. Landrieu
John W. Warner